

Communication & Implementation of Evaluation Results



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Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

- We are the main UK government agency for funding research and training in engineering and the physical sciences
- We invest around £800 million a year so the UK will be prepared for the next generation of technological change

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How do we evaluate what we do?

International Reviews are the main high-level mechanism we use for international benchmarking

- a rolling programme has reviewed each major 'discipline' in our remit roughly every five years
- each review is *a long process* – already implementing Mathematical Sciences International Review (2010)
- we also undertake evaluations at a number of more focused levels - usually around a *theme* or *programme*
- *project* level evaluation usually undertaken only for very large grants

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A bit of history...

First 'cycle' of International Reviews were mainly sponsored by EPSRC but managed by other stakeholders (e.g. relevant learned societies)

Significant changes introduced following an evaluation, commissioned from Technopolis in 2004, which identified opportunities :

- to improve consistency in approach and framework
- to achieve comparability of outcomes
- to better reflect Strategic framework

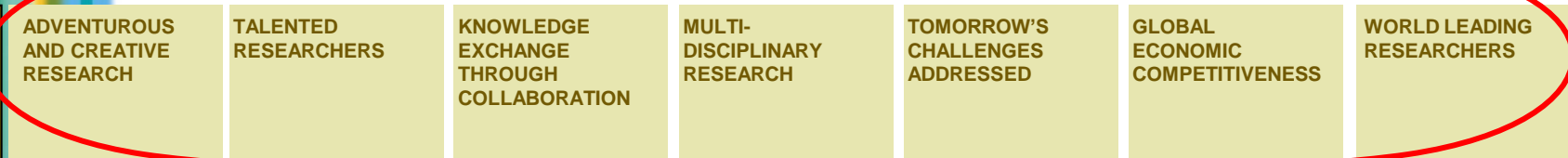
International Review's now adopt a standard evidence framework which both reflects and informs our strategic plan

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Context - EPSRC Strategic Plan

OUTCOMES/ GOALS



STRATEGIES



WHAT WE SUPPORT



So, HOW do we get what we want?

■ Clarity of aims is essential

- We want the review to generate clear advice going forward
- We want the review to deliver benefits to all stakeholders

■ Process is key to the outcome

- Stakeholder guidance (Steering Committee)
- Clear evidence framework
- Planning

■ The final report should contain no surprises

'communication' is essential throughout !

Steering Committee

- Highly respected individuals, **nominated by relevant learned societies and other key bodies**, represent the interests of the community
- **Guide and assist** the implementation of the international review process.
- **Discuss with the international review panel their findings** and provide advice where appropriate.
- **Participate in the dissemination** of the international review findings to the wider stakeholder community.

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'Guide and Assist' ...?

Key tasks for the Steering Committee

Agree Terms of Reference, Identify Panel chair + reserves	11 Nov 2009
Shortlist panel members, agree universities to be visited, agree evidence framework	8 Mar 2010
Confirm panel membership, agree outline format for review week, review data/info to be provided against evidence framework	7 May 2010
Review progress on information to support review panel and discuss key messages/ highlights, agree finalised format for the week, discuss format/invitees for Town Meeting	6 Oct 2010
Review final version of information pack for panel members and review arrangements for panel visit	2 Nov 2010
Hold for any last minute discussions/arrangements	tbc
Review Week	5-11 Dec 2010
Town Meeting	(tbc) early 2011



International Panel Members

- Nomination -

- A key opportunity for **community influence**
 - **On-line** nomination exercise
- Community directly invited to nominate
 - Heads of Department
 - Pro-VCs (Research)
 - Learned Societies
 - Industry bodies
- **Open to all** via EPSRC website

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International Panel Members

- Selection -

- Steering Committee reviews nominations received and identifies preferred candidates
- Key selection criteria: panel members' combined expertise must provide full coverage of the remit area of the review
- Other selection criteria:
 - balance of international perspectives
 - user representation
 - gender balance
- Ideally, committee will also identify a 'second choice' for each preferred candidate – panel members may drop out!
- AIM: a panel that commands the respect of the community!

Recall EPSRC Strategic Framework

High level questions to be addressed:

TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES ADDRESSED	To what extent is the community addressing key technological/ societal challenges through engaging in new research opportunities
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH	To what extent is the research base contributing to other disciplines and multidisciplinary research?
KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE THROUGH COLLABORATION	What is the level of knowledge exchange between the research base and industry that is of benefit to both sides?
GLOBAL ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS	To what extent is the research activity focussed to benefit the UK economy and global competitiveness?
TALENTED RESEARCHERS	To what extent is the UK able to attract talented young researchers into the mathematical sciences? Is there evidence that they are being nurtured and supported at every stage of their career?
WORLD LEADING RESEARCHERS	To what extent are UK researchers engaged in "best with best" international interactions?
ADVENTUROUS AND CREATIVE RESEARCH	What is the impact on a global scale of the UK research community both in terms of research quality and the profile of researchers? What evidence is there to support the existence of a creative and adventurous research base and portfolio?



Evidence Collection

- Public call for evidence
- Notices of call sent to key stakeholders
- Standard templates seek evidence that will help the panel to consider the Framework Questions
- Augmented by publicly available data to provide context, e.g.
 - UK research policy and funding environment
 - Balance of (EPSRC) research portfolio
 - Research community demographics
 - Previous International Review reports and progress updates
- All evidence for panel reviewed and approved by SC

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Review Programme

Panel in UK for a week only

- Day 1 Briefing by EPSRC / Steering Committee
- Days 2-5 Visits / meetings with research community and key research users
- Day 6 Report drafting and delivery of main findings with Steering Committee and EPSRC. Discussion of perceptions – clarification of facts

Visit format and itinerary approved by Steering Committee

Daily agendas structured to a common template but
details populated by those visited by IR Panel

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Town Meeting

- Date set well in advance
- Panel Report circulated in advance
- Meeting – opportunity for community to raise questions and if necessary for Panel Chair to clarify the basis of perceptions formed by the Panel – *findings and recommendations do not change*
- Start of dialogue involving all stakeholders to develop an action plan in response to panel findings/recommendations

Implementation?

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Examples of 'Implementation'

International Reviews provide...

- an important source of **evidence** used to inform EPSRC planning.
 - Graduate Training – IR recommendations were a key driver behind the launch this year of 40 new Centres for Doctoral Trainings, an investment of £250 million.
- **independent benchmarking with impact** on strategic planning
 - Programme Planning – adjustments to balance of investments within and between programme informed by IR findings
- **a mirror to the community** that can help put 'issues' in perspective – the Chemistry International Review concluded:
 - Overall outstanding NMR, mass spectroscopy, analytical facilities, etc.
 - Seemingly equipped at a level that Max Planck Institutes are the only near equivalent in Europe Chemistry equipment levels actually amongst the best in Europe

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Conclusions

Communication

- is critically important throughout the process

Implementation

- in terms of achieving desired outcomes – is in part delivered by the process, does not start with publication of the final report



**Thank you
for your attention**

Questions?

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